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SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR OCTOBER 6  
ICG

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1745

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The third consultative meeting of the international contact group (ICG) on Madagascar will be hosted by the African Union in Antananarivo October 6. This meeting presents an opportunity to shore up cohesiveness within the international community and endorse mediator Chissano's leadership and the agreements reached in Maputo. Paragraph three contains suggested talking points for use at the meeting, and paragraph four provides reference background on relevant events since the second ICG consultative meeting July 22. We welcome the participation of AF Senior Advisor Ambassador Phil Carter as head of our delegation. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The third consultative meeting of the international contact group (ICG) on the situation in Madagascar will be hosted by the African Union in Antananarivo October 6. ICG members (EU, Indian Ocean Commission, OIF, SADC, UN, Security Council Perm 5 and 3 African non-permanent members) will discuss efforts to return to constitutional order in Madagascar since the second consultative meeting of July 22 (reftel). Following a recap of events by the mediators, representatives of the four political movements will speak and respond to questions, followed by a discussion among ICG members of the way forward, concluding with drafting a communique. Several ICG members may send senior representatives from their capitals to attend the meeting. In addition to Ping and Lamamra of the AU, France, which is highly engaged on the ground here (and in Paris) with the HAT, reportedly may send Cooperation Minister Alain Joyandet. However, the latest information from Paris suggests his participation may be uncertain and that the French may be represented by their local Ambassador.

¶3. (SBU) At the ICG, lead mediator former Mozambican President Chissano, appointed by SADC, will likely be looking for a renewed confirmation of his mandate to lead the mediation process, which the AU continuously points out is "under the auspices of the AU", and an endorsement by the international community of the agreements reached in August in Maputo. Without renewed, united pressure from the international community, the de facto regime is unlikely to respect promises to compromise and create a truly consensual transition regime. Thus, this ICG meeting presents an opportunity to shore up solidarity within the international community to ensure that all members are sending the same signals to the Malagasy transition authority (HAT) and other political actors, support the negotiation efforts led by Chissano, and urge respect for the agreements reached in Maputo. During the ICG meeting, U.S. officials should encourage all members to pressure the HAT to engage in negotiations rather than moving unilaterally towards elections. Following are suggested talking points for use by U.S. officials during the ICG meeting:

-- The U.S. thanks the AU for convening this meeting. We continue to support the AU, SADC, UN, and the OIF in their

efforts to promote the restoration of constitutional order and the rule of law in Madagascar. We applaud the tireless efforts of the mediation team to move this process forward, including the successful negotiations undertaken in Maputo in August to define a transition charter.

-- We reiterate the views expressed in our public statement on September 4 that called on the Malagasy parties to respect and reaffirm their commitment to the Maputo process and accords, notably through the rapid implementation of a consensual transition government.

-- We remain concerned about ongoing intimidation and the lack of respect for human rights in Madagascar, including the arrests of political prisoners, the lack of due process, prohibitions on freedom of movement, and the denial of freedom of assembly.

-- We call on the Malagasy leaders to take concrete steps as soon as possible to re-establish the rule of law, including by promoting constitutional rule and due process and limiting corruption. Doing so is critical to creating a climate for reconciliation among the parties, and is also a necessary pre-requisite for the renewal of AGOA eligibility on which many jobs and a large part of Madagascar's export economy depend. Meeting the established criteria for AGOA eligibility is the responsibility of the Malagasy authorities, not the USG.

-- Finally, the U.S. expresses our view that the Group and its members should continue to act in a concerted manner to put pressure on the illegal authorities in Madagascar, as

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well as on the other political movements, to restore constitutional order through free, fair, and credible elections. We encourage all Group members to continue their isolation and/or non-recognition of the HAT, in their words and in their deeds.

-- The USG is prepared to support the electoral process in Madagascar only once a truly consensual, inclusive, and neutral government is in place.

14. (SBU) For background and easy reference during the meeting, the following is a summary timeline of key events pertaining to the Malagasy crisis since the last ICG meeting on July 22:

- July 22: The ICG issued a communiqué condemning violence, warning against unilateral moves, and agreeing to convene a meeting of the four movements in Maputo under the leadership of Chissano.
- August 9: A transition charter and supporting documents were signed by all four movements during negotiations in Maputo.
- August 27: The second round of talks in Maputo was blocked over who would occupy the top three posts in the transition government (Transition President, Vice President, and Prime Minister).
- September 4: The Embassy issued a statement urging a peaceful, consensual resolution to the political crisis and encouraging "all parties to respect and reaffirm their commitment to the Maputo process and accords, notably through the rapid implementation of a consensual transition government." The statement warned that "unilateral action by any party threatens to jeopardize the resolution of this political crisis, in which the United States remains, impartial." Later that day, Rajoelina failed to compromise however, and ordered prime minister Monja to form a consensus government, indicating that his movement would retain the top two posts.

- September 5: The ICG members in Antananarivo issued a statement calling on the parties to reach a consensual distribution of key transition posts and warning against unilateral solutions.

- September 8: PM Monja, retained by TGV, announced the members of a "consensus" government that was far from consensual.

- September 8: SADC issued a communique rejecting unilateral decisions that violate the spirit of the Maputo agreements and reiterated its suspension of Madagascar.

- September 10: The AU Peace and Security Council issued a press statement expressing concern about the HAT's violation of the Maputo agreements and condemning the unilateral decisions made by Rajoelina. The council decided to meet later to discuss sanctions.

- September 18: The AU issued a communique announcing the third ICG-M and threatening to impose targeted sanctions against the perpetrators of the unconstitutional change of government if constitutional order is not restored.

-- September 25: SADC led a successful motion in the UNGA denying HAT President Rajoelina the opportunity to speak there. He subsequently departed for Paris, where he has been for the past five days, meeting with the GOF, mediators, Ratsiraka, and perhaps others. Vituperative anti-SADC rhetoric, including some targeting the mediators themselves, has become prevalent here (septel).

15. (U) Please note that Ambassador Marquardt and 'Tana P/E Chief Dovie Holland will attend the ICG in support of Ambassador Carter. In addition to the formal ICG events on October 6, we are seeking relevant side meetings for Ambassador Carter with key actors starting over the weekend.

MARQUARDT